

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO

ORIGINITY Korea

DATE DISTR 7 NOV 51

SUBJECT Agricultural and Economic Conditions in the
Pyongwon-gun and Yonbaek-gun Areas

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE 25X1A

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1. The North Korean Farmers' Alliance in early 1951 assumed the task of apportioning arable land in North Korea, particularly where land had been confiscated from the original owners for political or other reasons, such as the flight of the owners to South Korea with retreating United Nations forces late in 1950. Land is assigned either to North Korean refugees or, more often, to labor Party members. Occasionally, where the land is tilled by members of the Alliance, the land is referred to as a "collective farm". In the Pyongwon-gun (125-37, 39-24) (YD 2504) area the first half of the spot tarmation on the 1951 harvest was collected in June. The amount charged some farmers was more than their total production, and in such cases they were forced to buy grain on the open market to meet their quota. Ten pairs of straw sandals were collected from each household in this area in July for the North Korean army.
2. By the end of July 1951, farmers in the Pongsan (125-43, 38-26) (YD 3761) and Pyongsean (126-27, 38-10) (HT 7727) areas of Kwanghae Province had completed the task of transplanting rice sprouts from seed beds into the fields in 80 percent of the area. Other farming conditions in the area, however, were poor, because of the shortage of manpower, the lack of fertilizer, and the failure to weed the fields properly. The North Korean government was forcing farmers in the Yonbaek-gun (126-06, 38-02) (HT 4003) area and other sections near the thirty-eighth parallel to move northward to help on farms farther behind the front lines. In the Yonbaek area in July a small mal of rice cost 4,000 North Korean won,¹ and 30 yards of cotton cloth, 25,000 won. In early August the price had fallen to between 2,000 and 2,500 North Korean won because the forced movement of families made it difficult to carry the rice and advantageous to convert it into money. A consumer's union in the area which was established with much North Korean propaganda was ineffective and existed only nominally.

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no trade being carried on through it and there being no established prices. Trade in early August was mainly by barter. In the Yonbaek-gun area, ROK currency circulated widely, the rate of exchange being about eight ROK won to one North Korean won in early August, whereas in June the rate had been about ten to one.

3. Prices in Ulliyul-gun (125-15, 38-31) in July 1951 compared with prices a year earlier were as follows, the price a year ago being given in parentheses: rubber shoes, 3,000 North Korean won (500); laundry soap, 300 won (60); small mal of rice, 1,000 won (350); small mal of Indian millet, 750 won (250).
4. About 4,000 bags of barley and wheat, 200 bags of rice, and 300 bags of unhulled rice were collected as taxes in kind from those areas of Yonbaek-gun south of the thirty-eighth parallel by the end of July. In early August the grains were hidden at the northern foot of a mountain in Hosan-ni, Unsan-ryon (126-23, 37-59) (BT 7007), in a grove of high chestnut trees.
5. In early August the population in the P'yongwon-gun area was suffering from contagious diseases because of the lack of medical supplies. The P'yongsan area was most seriously affected and a large number of deaths occurred. Disease was also widespread among farm animals, particularly in Soga-ryon (125-41, 38-10) (YC 3527) and Unsan-ryon (125-57, 38-09) (YC 5826). Local veterinarians were killing infected oxen and pigs and using vaccines of undetermined types in an attempt to control the spread of these diseases. Carbonic acid (sic) was employed as a sterilizing agent for horses and oxen.
6. In early August the Sariwon People's Committee employed more than 70 persons. Most of them were engaged in lecturing and guidance tours of farming villages near the city to instruct the farmers in proper agricultural procedures, collect taxes in kind, and expedite the collection and transport of foodstuffs to the North Korean army.
7. In mid-August unhulled rice was being hauled by seven freight cars making two trips daily from the Ongjin (125-22, 37-56) (YC 0801) area to Sariwon. At Sariwon, which was an assembly point for food supplies, the rice was transferred to cars on the main line to Pyongyang. Cars were hidden during the day in a tunnel 700 meters long, north of the Naenghyon-ni (125-42, 38-14) (YC 3635) station. The main Chayang station on this line south of Haeju was not being used, but the Chayang underpass station was used instead. Here water was supplied to locomotives from a tank above one end of the tunnel, from which a pipe extended over the track at the entrance.

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1. Comment: A small mal of rice is about 15 pounds. The North Korean won is worth about one-sixth of a cent.

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